

# **DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING**

**Monday, October 19, 2009 – 5:00 p.m.  
Mayor's Reception Room  
Room 405, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor City Hall**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Michele Gordon; Warner Wirta; Donna Ennis; Toni Dickenson; Bea Kitto; Joy Dorscher; Ricky DeFoe (arrived late);

**EXCUSED:** Renee Van Nett;

**UNEXCUSED:** Donna Bluebird; Ron Boshey;

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Introductions**

Meeting was called to order by Donna Ennis, Co-chair, at 5:07pm. Commissioners introduced themselves, as did those present. Michele Gordon moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Warner Wirta. Motion approved by all commissioners.

### **2. Review and Approval of Minutes from the September 21, 2009 Meeting**

Michele Gordon moved to approve the minutes of September 21, 2009, seconded by Warner Wirta, and motion was approved by all commissioners present.

### **3. Public Comment Period**

Jan Karon, ( 350.org) was present to offer an invitation to all present. The International week of climate protection is this week, she announced. A small committee in Duluth is organizing this. There are many actions taking place all over the world, this Saturday. 350 parts per million is the most green house gases that will allow us to be sustainable at this point on the Earth. She passed out a handout regarding what the Duluth committee is planning for this Saturday. (See attached notice). A Rally at the DECC starts at 3pm on Saturday. All are invited.

Beth Olson – Running for City Council at large. Sat in on meeting until the end and then asked for time to address the commission. She agrees that the Spirit Mt. Board needs a Native person or more on it. Stated she would be open to working closely with the DAIC if she is elected to the City Council next week.

### **4. Old Business**

#### **A. AICHO'S Gimaajii (YWCA Housing/ Indian Center) Report – Sherry Sanchez-Tibbetts**

Sherry Sanchez-Tibbetts was present. She shared that AICHO has been working on developing the Indian Center, and to finalize some of the plans. She sees that AICHO is in the final months of finalizing these plans. In December she said the construction phase will begin. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors will be torn out and gutted to make apartments. Work will also happen in the lobby, and a new elevator installed. AICHO hosted Humphrey fellows from the twin cities – they came up to study human rights recently. They were enthusiastic about the AICHO project. AICHO was one of only 9 projects selected nation-wide for the National Trust for Historic Preservations. MN Housing Finance (over 3 million dollars into project) has made this their top priority project. Students from Scholastica came in to do some work on the building. The YWCA has decided to keep Trepanier Hall. The Indian Center will now be housed in the Historic Building. There will also be an area for UMD's Health Center in this space, with the possibility of also having a space for Traditional Medicine ways. Donna Ennis suggested that we ask Senator Al Franken to come for the ribbon cutting session. A date has not been set yet for the ribbon cutting. But Sherry shared they are looking at sometime before Thanksgiving. An invitation will be extended to Senator Franken by Donna Ennis and Sherry Sanchez-Tibbetts.

**B. Million Mom March – Handout**

Bea Kitto supplied handouts for this.

**C. Letter – Warner Wirta**

An editorial that Warner Wirta sent to the Duluth News Tribune was handed out to Commissioners and kept for the record.

**5. New Business**

**A. Biomedical Research Careers for American Indians – Ben Clarke**

Ben Clarke – UMD faculty member at Medical School was present and shared the following information. He is the director of several Indian Health Services programs regarding health issues of Native Americans and what they face. Two programs – at LSC and FDL colleges – have students with an interest in science. Ben Clarke is hoping this course will help them. They will work with scientists like himself, Ben Clarke said. UMD juniors and seniors – goal is to try to get them into graduate school and doctorate programs. Native Americans are a severely under-represented population in the sciences. CDC made assumptions about populations they knew nothing about, regarding Native populations, according to Ben Clarke. Someone who understands the culture needs to be there to step forward in regard to health-care issues. Every culture has a different style of handling things and seeking treatments. Trained professionals from within the population are needed, Dr. Clarke shared. His program conducted some student experiments this past

summer – Summer Bridge program, a 10 week program – to foster scientific curiosity in students. Students researched the barrels in Lake Superior. Students visited Red Cliff to view the area.

#### **B. American Cancer Society – Marjorie Johnson**

Marjorie Johnson brought in some handouts for commissioners. Cancer burden is heavier for Native Americans in this area than for any other people. Screenings are needed, and Marjorie is working with local tribes. She has worked with Dr. Dorscher as well. She shared she wants to contract her work and is seeking support and contacts that people here could share. She has also joined the Health Subcommittee that the DAIC has. She would like to host education and screening events in the Spring. These would be for men and women. Any guidance and contacts are welcome, Marjorie shared.

#### **C. Interpretive Center – Anthony Marsh**

Americorps is where Anthony Marsh is working, which is apolitical. He comes here to gain ideas and to express things that are currently happening. He brought in some maps showing projects that are being planned in the area. The DTA is planning to put a parking ride in the area at the base of Spirit Mountain. Dredging is also being planned around Tallas Island. This island would then become a protected area. The entire island is man-made. It is also prohibiting the aquatic species from accessing Knowlton Creek. Historically, Spirit Mountain is very significant to Anishinabe people. Lots of events, culturally significant, took place there. Limit of the environmental impact is one thought Mr. Marsh has. He also has spoken to Warner Wirta about how there is no Native voice on the Spirit Mountain board. There is a proposal for a water infrastructure project for the purpose of snow-making from the water near Tallas Island. Perhaps an interpretive center could be put into a shelter at the base of Spirit Mountain in the parking ride space. There has been resistance to having a Native person on the Spirit Mountain board. Ricky DeFoe and Warner Wirta have met with the mayor about this, but the board still chose someone else who is not Native.

#### **D. Second Harvest Food Bank – Jim Croud**

From MCT (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe). Jim brought in handouts regarding this. He has been asked to become a board member for this agency. Jim cannot due to being too busy. So he is asking if anyone from the Commission is interested. The mission is feeding the hungry, rescuing and distributing food and engaging our region in the fight against hunger. They work with the Food Bank; Food Rescue; Mother and Children; Senior Nutrition; and Kids Café. They have not had Native people on this board before. They meet monthly. If anyone on the commission is interested, they may call Shaye Morris, Executive Director, at 727-5653, ext. 113.

#### **E. Disparities Project – Jim Croud**

**This project is about 9 months old, with SLC and MCT. The idea behind this came about due to disparities of unemployment rates of Native American and African American populations. This has been historical for a long time. A grant was written (with community action of Duluth) to get some funding to help with this. The project starts over again in December, and Jim will be leaving MCT and his position as Job Counselor there to do this new job. Tribal enrollment of people was at first required, but this is no longer so. Jim is here to do networking to let people know about this program. Six employers are part of the program. Radisson is one; San Marcos; St. Luke's Hospital; GoodWill are some involved in this program. Duluth at Work has been setting up the partnership, but in December, Jim said they will have more to say about this. Most of the partnership has been entry-level jobs thus far. SLC was supposed to be one of the partners, but so far no jobs have been set up through SLC. Jim should know in about a week of the grant went through. It is a one-year grant. Jim can be contacted at: 722-7585.**

#### **F. 2010 Work Plan**

**Sub-Committees were decided upon. We have 6 of them: Health; Child Welfare; Environmental; Education; Housing and Crime (Civilian Review Board). Each sub-committee will be featured at one of our meetings 3 times per year. Here is the yearly tentative outline:**

**January: Education and Child Welfare sub-committees**

**February: Environmental sub-committee**

**March: Health and Housing sub-committees**

**April: Crime/ Citizens Review Board sub-committee**

**May: Education and Child Welfare sub-committees**

**June: Environmental sub-committee**

**July: Health and Housing sub-committees**

**August: Crime/ Citizens Review Board sub-committee**

**September: Education and Child Welfare sub-committees**

**October: Environmental sub-committee**

**November: Health and Housing sub-committees**

**December: Crime/ Citizens Review Board sub-committee**

#### **6. Announcements, Upcoming Events and Comments from Commission Members**

**RD – Glad to be here and glad everyone else is here. Still lots to be done, looking at grants for Anishinabe Ode'. This is difficult with TL passing away, he said. Other sub-committees may pop up through the year. Representation of FDL was lacking in regard at the JDAI meeting. Last time, a representative was there from FDL, after Ricky confronted this.**

**WW - Sweat Lodge situation where 3 people died during a sweat lodge run by James Arthur Ray. Warner wants the commission to write a letter to the**

**government about those exploiting Indian Spirituality. Warner also brought up a CNN attorney regarding how our ways are “gibberish” (speaking of the sweat lodge and our spirituality). National Congress of American Indian Affairs is who Warner would like to see the letter go to. Warner has volunteered to do the letter with Donna Ennis’ assistance, and they will send it off.**

**BK - This is her last meeting until May of 2010. She will be out of town until then.**

**TD – Passed.**

**JD – Update on her mother: She is found to have metastat breast cancer. She is getting chemotherapy and had one lung collapse. She is now home, and is doing OK.**

**MG – Seconded what was said about the deaths in a sweat lodge at Sedona, and the inappropriate-ness of this use of ceremonial ways.**

**DE - Passed.**

**7. Next Meeting/ Date/ Location**

**The next DAIC meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2009 at 5:00 pm in the Mayor’s Reception Room, Fourth Floor City Hall, Room 405.**

**7. Adjournment**